

General Certificate of Education
June 2004
Advanced Level Examination



GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Unit 4 Comparative UK/USA Government

GOV4

Tuesday 29 June 2004 Morning Session

In addition to this paper you will require:
an 8-page answer book.

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

Instructions

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen. Pencil should only be used for drawing.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is GOV4.
- Answer **Question 1** and **one** other question.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- Mark allocations are shown in brackets.
- You will be assessed on your ability to use an appropriate form and style of writing, to organise relevant information clearly and coherently, and to use specialist vocabulary, where appropriate. The degree of legibility of your handwriting and the level of accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar will also be taken into account.

Advice

- You are advised to read through the examination paper before you attempt the questions.
- You are advised to spend the same amount of time on each question.

Answer **Question 1** and **one** other question.

Each question carries 40 marks.

- 1 Study the extract below and answer parts (a), (b) and (c) which follow.

PARLIAMENTARY AND PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEMS

One of the key features of any political system is the relationship between legislative and executive authority.

Most liberal democracies have adopted some form of parliamentary government. The central feature of these systems is a fusion of legislative and executive power; government is parliamentary in that it is drawn from, and accountable to, the elected parliament. The strength of this system is that it supposedly delivers effective but responsible government.

Government is effective because it rests on the confidence of the parliament and can therefore, in most cases, ensure that its legislative programme is passed. In short, governments can get things done.

However, responsible government is maintained because the government can only govern as long as it retains the confidence of the parliament. In theory, the parliament has the upper hand because it has the ultimate power to remove the government. However, parliamentary government is often associated with the problem of executive domination. This led Lord Hailsham in 1976 to describe UK government as an “elective dictatorship”.

The principal alternative to a parliamentary government is a presidential system of government, based on a strict application of the doctrine of the separation of powers. This ensures that the assembly and executive are formally independent of one another and are separately elected. This is the case in the USA where the “founding fathers” wished to prevent the emergence of an overstrong executive. The resulting system, therefore, incorporated a system of *checks and balances*.

Congress and the US presidency are separate institutions in the sense that no overlap of personnel is permitted, but nevertheless they have the ability to constrain one another's power. Thus while Congress has the power to make law, the president can veto this, and Congress can in turn override the veto. Similarly, although the president has the power to make senior appointments, these are subject to confirmation by the Senate, and the two houses of Congress can combine to charge and impeach the president. Critics frequently argue that this is a recipe for “gridlock”.

Source: adapted from ANDREW HEYWOOD, *Politics* (Macmillan) 1997.
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- (a) Using the extract, explain the term *checks and balances*. (8 marks)
- (b) Using the extract and your own knowledge, compare the circumstances in which the UK Prime Minister and the US President may be removed from office. (12 marks)
- (c) “The UK system suffers from ‘elective dictatorship’ whilst the US system suffers from ‘gridlock’.” Discuss. (20 marks)

Answer either **Question 2** or **Question 3** or **Question 4**.

- 2** Examine the view that the US Constitution is too difficult to change while the UK constitution can be changed too easily. *(40 marks)*
- 3** To what extent are the rights of citizens better protected by the judiciary in the USA than in the UK? *(40 marks)*
- 4** Compare the roles, powers and influence of UK MPs with those of members of the US House of Representatives. *(40 marks)*

END OF QUESTIONS

THERE ARE NO QUESTIONS PRINTED ON THIS PAGE